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**Africa-RISING Ghana**

**Regional Research Team Meeting Report: Upper West Region**

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Venue: MoFA Conference Hall, Wa

15th August 2014

**1.0 Introduction**

The first monthly regional research team meeting held on the 15th of August 2014 at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) Conference Hall Wa in the Upper west region was chaired by Dr. Rashid Jimah the regional veterinary officer (MoFa) and moderated by Hamid (research supervisor, IITA Wa office). The meeting commenced with prayer from Chief Jesiwuni.

The chairperson gave a brief address by welcoming all participants to the occasion and entreated them to participate fully in the discussions. He mentioned that the Regional MoFA director could not attend the meeting due to his busy schedule.

Hamid briefed the participants on the aims, scope and focus of the Africa RISING project. He mentioned that the project was to ensure sustainable intensification of small-holder mixed farming system in West Africa (Ghana and Mali), East Africa (Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi) and Ethiopian Highlands. In Ghana, the project is being implemented in the Upper West, Upper East and the Northern regions. In the Upper West region, the project is being implemented in five (5) communities in the Nadowli-Kaleo district and five communities in the Wa West district. He listed the intervention communities as Passe, Nyagli, Guo, Zanko and Siriyiri for Wa West and Gyilli, Papu, Nator-Duori, Goli and Goriyiri in the Nadowli-Kaleo district.

He outlined the objectives of the project as:

* Increase the productivity of small holder farmers (crops and livestock)
* Improve upon the nutrition of women and children
* Improve upon the natural resource base (soil, water and vegetation)
* Capacity building
* Increase household incomes

Hamid further mention that the regional research meeting was to bring scientist from partner institutions together on a common platform to discuss the various activities being carried out on the ground to afford partners the opportunity to collaborate better for the success of the project and the overall benefit of rural folks. Participants were informed that these research meetings would be held monthly and entreated all to make it a point to attend so they could strategize well for the various field activities without any delays.

He outlined all planned activities categorized into ten work-pages (WP) for the participants. These included: WP1-Socio-economic studies on sustainable intensification; WP2- Raising and sustaining productivity in cereal-legume cropping systems; WP3- Biological control of aflatoxins; WP4- Integrating vegetables into cereal-legume systems; WP5- Improving farm and field productivity and profitability, WP6-Intensifying livestock and poultry production; WP7- Raising and sustaining productivity of integrated crop livestock production; WP8- Management of land, soil and water to intensify cereal-legume production, WP9- Managing natural resources to increase watershed productivity and WP10- Improving household nutrition and value addition. He then called the various leaders of the work packages who were participating in the meeting to present their progress report.

**2.0 Summary of discussions**

**2.1 WP2- Raising and sustaining productivity in cereal-legume cropping systems in Northern Ghana**

Dr. Saaka Buah, who leads the SARI activities, said he has been involved in cereal-legume rotation trials for the past one year.

He enumerated a number of challenges hampering his work plan as:

1. Inadequate land space in some communities due to increasing number of trials.

2. Some intervention communities too far away from SARI.

3. Limited Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) to collect data in all intervention communities.

IITA activities under WP2 for the year 2014 as presented by Hamid included:

1. Trials on maize response to different fertilizer rates, maize-sesame intercrop, soybean soil fertility, as well as soybean and cowpea varietal trials
2. Effect of spraying on cowpea varieties
3. Trial on groundnut response to different fertilizer regimes.
4. Pigeon Pea short and medium duration.
5. Cereal legume strip cropping and cereal legume rotational trials
6. Time of planting on sesame varieties
7. Effects of spraying on sesame varieties
8. Extension officers and community facilitators had been trained.
9. Up scaling and baby trials with 752 farmers throughout all the ten (10) intervention communities.

**2.2 WP4- Integrating vegetables into cereal-legume cropping systems in northern Ghana**

Hamid mentioned maize-okra intercrops and maize-roselle intercrops as trials being carried out under WP4. They could not transplant raised tomato, garden eggs and pepper seedlings due to the delay of rains.

**2.3 WP6- Intensifying livestock and poultry production in northern Ghana**

Mr. Osman Abubakari presented on behalf of Dr. Franklin Avarnyo of Animal Research Institute (ARI). He mentioned that they were using farmers’ own small ruminants for a supplementary feeding trial in two (AR) intervention communities (Natoduori and Guo). The animals are weighed monthly and their faecal matter collected for laboratory analysis.

**2.4 WP8- Land, soil and water management to intensify cereal-legume farming systems in Ghana**

Dr. Tim Ellis of IWMI said they had identified potential sites for community dugouts and with the use of tractor mounted implement or with draught animals to assist farmers especially in the dry season crop production. They had planned to train farmers in Zanko and Passe on rain water harvesting techniques. He lastly mentioned that rain gauges will be given to some educated farmers in the communities to help measure the monthly rainfall patterns in those communities.

**2.5 General discussions and comments**

* Chief Jesiwuni said he was not happy with the way the livestock component under the leadership of Dr. Avornyo of Animal Research Institute is been implemented, because the farmers' practice was not given any priority. He said projects should be aimed at farming families and should collaborate more with farmers and other partners.
* Dr Saaka also criticized Dr. Avornyo, for not briefing his colleague scientist (Dr. Panyan) on ARI’s activities. He ended by saying that these meetings should be continued especially at the beginning of the season.
* Dr. Rashid inquired whether the animals put under supplementary feeding are vaccinated, Mr. Osman answered in the affirmative. Dr. Rashid suggested it was improper for Dr. Avornyo to bring veterinarians from Tamale to Wa when his outfit was still present.
* Dr. Tim Ellis suggested that meeting days for the regions should at least be separated by a day to enable him attend all three regional meetings.

**3.0 Summary of major outcomes**

Progress reports on work packages 2, 4, 6 and 8 were discussed by the work package leaders or their representatives present.

**Closing remarks**

Dr. Rashid thanked all participants for making it a point to attend and contributing meaningful in the discussions and entreated all to try and come in their numbers during next month meeting.

**Table 1. List of participants**

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| Name of participant | Institution | Phone number | E-mail Address |
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